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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001732

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SUBJECT: NOTWITHSTANDING INTERPOL NOTICES, UZBEK REFUGEES
ARRIVE IN CZECH REPUBLIC

REF: PRAGUE 1630

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 b+d.

11. (C) Post has learned that the 15 Uzbek refugees selected for resettlement in the Czech Republic arrived in the Czech Republic December 15 (although this information has not yet been made public).

12. (C) This number includes six refugees who are the subject of Interpol "diffusion notices" issued by the Uzbek government. Post understands that UNHCR, PRM, and U.S. law enforcement authorities believe the issuance of the notices was politically motivated (possibly to disrupt resettlement of the refugees), and therefore these authorities view the notices as invalid and unenforceable. After careful consideration, the Czech MOI also took this view. Pavla Fridrichova, an official in the MOI's Department for Asylum and Migration Policy, confirmed December 16 that the Czechs will not/not arrest the six refugees. As an Interpol member state, the Czechs will conduct pro forma extradition proceedings for the six, but do not plan to return them to Uzbekistan. Fridrichova explained extradition would violate Czech law because the six have "recognized refugee" status. The only exception would be if new information emerges that demonstrates any of the six is a terrorist. According to Fridrichova, the exception is only "theoretical" in this case.
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